



NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION

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PALM BEACH COUNTY (SOUTHEASTERN FLORIDA)

by Kathy Malone

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TOP BUTTERFLY NECTAR FLOWERS

A number in front of a flower name indicates a particularly recommended plant (1 = most recommended). Abbreviations: A = alien species, N = native species.

| FLOWER | HEIGHT | BLOOM | | ATTRACTED BUTTERFLIES | COMMENTS |
|--|--------|--------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| | | COLOR | SEASON | | |
| N 8 Black-eyed Susan <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> | 1-2' | yellow | year-round, most spring-fall | Skippers, Red Admiral | annual to short-lived perennial, reseeds |
| N 5 Blue mistflower <i>Conoclinium coelestinum</i> | 6-12" | blue | year-round/ most summer-fall | Monarch, Queen | perennial that spreads by rhizomes and reseeds, trim in early summer |
| N 2 Blue porterweed <i>Stachytarpheta jamaicensis</i> | 1-3' | purple | year-round | many | short-lived perennial, reseeds, cut woody growth in spring |
| A 5 Butterfly bush <i>Buddleia davidii</i> | 4-5' | purple, pink | spring-fall | many | requires regular pruning, grown as annual in S. Florida |
| N 1 Butterfly sage <i>Cordia globosa</i> | 5' | white | year-round | Atala, Hairstreaks, Ruddy Daggerwing, Skippers, many | branch may die for no apparent reason. prune 1-2/yr |
| N 7 Fiddlewood <i>Citharexylum fruticosum</i> | 25' | white | year-round | Atala & many others | fragrant, prune or it grows into tree, drought tolerant, moth caterpillars pest |
| N 1 Firebush <i>Hamelia patens</i> | 1-15' | orange | year-round | Sulphurs, Swallowtails, Zebra Heliconian, Julia, Gulf Fritillary (attracts hummingbirds) | one of best for nectar, berries for wildlife, cold sensitive |
| N 1 Lantana, wild sage <i>Lantana involucrata</i> | 4-6' | white | year-round | Atala and others | nice bush, prune to keep bushy |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|---|------|--------------------------|-------------|--|--|
| A 5 | Mexican flame vine <i>Senecio confusus</i> | vine | orange | year-round | Sulphurs, Zebra Heliconian, Julia, many others | can take over, prune |
| N 8 | Pennyroyal <i>Piloblephis rigida</i> | 6" | purple | winter | Skippers | minty smell, great groundcover |
| A 3 | Pentas <i>Pentas lanceolata</i> | 1-4' | Red, pink, white, purple | year-round | Polydamas & Giant Swallowtails, Sulphurs | frequent pruning; gets woody in 1-2 years |
| A 4 | Pink porterweed <i>Stachytarpheta Mutabilis</i> | 6' | pink | year-round | Gulf Fritillary, Monarch Sulphurs, Gulf Fritillary, & others | prune often (it gets top heavy and stem splits easily) blooms very pretty. |
| N 9 | Spanish needles <i>Bidens alba</i> | 1-4' | white | year-round | Sulphurs, many butterflies | "weedy," hard to control in yard, also host plant for Dainty Sulphur |
| A 3 | Tithonia, Mexican sunflower <i>Tithonia rotundifolia</i> | 4-6' | orange | summer-fall | Monarchs, Zebra Heliconian, Swallowtails, many | annual, easy to grow from seeds |
| N 4 | Tropical sage <i>Salvia coccinea</i> | 1-2' | red, pink | year-round | Sulphurs, Gulf Fritillary, others | prune or replace annually, reseeds readily |
| N 8 | Verbena <i>Verbena tampensis</i> | 1' | Purple | year-round | Buckeyes, Sulphurs, Gulf Fritillary & others | semi-shade (to last longer) |
| N 3 | White crownbeard <i>Verbesina virginica</i> | 3-6' | white | aug-nov | Atala, Ruddy Daggerwing, many others | Perennial, reseeds, prune in spring to keep short |
| N 2 | Wild coffee <i>Psychotria nervosa</i> | 5-8' | white | summer-fall | Zebra Heliconian, Julia, Gulf Fritillary, others | likes shade; prune |

NECTAR FLOWERS THAT DON'T WORK IN THIS REGION

Abbreviations: A = alien species, N = native species.

| FLOWER | COMMENTS |
|------------------------------------|--|
| N Blanket flower <i>Gaillardia</i> | A nice native plant that is drought tolerant but not used much for nectar. |
| N Dune sunflower | Great native ground cover but only occasionally used for nectar. |
| N Ironweed <i>Vernonia</i> | Beautiful purple blooms but seldom used for nectar. |
| N Necklace pod | A nice native plant; Long-Tailed Skipper, Sulphurs, and Cassius Blue nectar on it, but most butterflies do not use it. |
| N Tickseed <i>Coreopsis</i> | Never seen anything nectar on this (our state wildflower) but Zebra Heliconian observed on <i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i> |

TOP CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS

A number in front of a plant name indicates a particularly recommended plant (1 = most recommended). Abbreviations: A = alien species, N = native species.

| | NAME | HEIGHT | COLOR/SEASON | CATERPILLARS | COMMENTS |
|-----|--|--------------|--|---|--|
| N 2 | Wild plumbago <i>Plumbago scandens</i> | 1-3' | white/year-round | Cassius Blue | also uses non-native blue plumbago |
| N 1 | Bahama senna/cassia <i>Senna mexicana var. Chapmanii</i> | 3-5' | yellow/year-round, peak fall | Sulphurs, Orange-barréd Sulphur and Cloudless Sulphur | perfect for small gardens and part-sun; many non-natives are invasive and some are pest plants |
| N 1 | Privet senna <i>S. ligustrina</i> | 4-8' | yellow/year-round | Sulphurs, Orange-barréd Sulphur and Cloudless Sulphur | easy to grow in small gardens |
| N 8 | Coontie <i>Zamia pumila</i> <i>syn. Z. floridana, Z. integrifolia</i> | 1' | year-round | Atala | slow growing cycad; new growth in spring; dioecious; parts are poisonous: do not plant if pets chew |
| A 1 | Fennel, parsley, dill | ½-1' | spring/year-round | Black Swallowtail | perennial fennel; butterflies primarily in spring and summer |
| N 2 | Partridge pea <i>Chamaecrista fasciculata</i> | 2' | yellow/fall | Sulphurs, Sleepy Orange, Cloudless Sulphur | weak perennial but seeds spread |
| N 1 | Passionvine <i>Passiflora suberosa, P. multiflora</i> | vine | white/spring-fall | Gulf Fritillary, Zebra, Julia | some alien passion vines will attract but spread by runners; <i>P. biflora</i> and <i>P. foetida</i> are invasive pest plants—do not plant |
| A 4 | Pipevine <i>Aristolochia macrophylla</i> | vine | green-purple/ most summer | Polydamas Swallowtail | plant plenty for the numerous caterpillars; <i>A. elegans</i> is invasive pest plant; native <i>A. pentandra</i> endangered grows in S. Florida |
| N 9 | Red bay <i>Persea borbonia</i> | 20-70' | flower insignificant | Palamedes Swallowtail | prune to keep a smaller tree; will only attract if near natural areas |
| A 1 | Scarlet milkweed <i>Asclepias curassavica</i> | 2-3' | orange/ year-round | Monarch, Queen | prune after blooms; plant native milkweeds when possible like swamp milkweed, <i>A. perennis</i> and <i>A. incarnata</i> ; <i>A. tuberosa</i> hard to grow in S. Florida |
| N 7 | Water hyssop <i>Bacopa monnieri</i> | ground cover | whitish pink/year-round | White Peacock | plant in wet area, or add peat to soil; can grow in pots without drainage |
| N 6 | White twinevine <i>Sarcostemma clausum</i> | vine | white/year-round | Soldier, Queen | grows in moist to wet soil |
| N 5 | Wild lime <i>Zanthoxylum fagara</i> | 10-20' | green yellow/ most in spring & summer | Giant Swallowtail | thorny; prune to control sprawly growth |

COMMON BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

| NAME | FLIGHT PERIOD | CATERPILLAR SEASON | CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS | COMMENTS |
|---|---------------|--------------------|---|--|
| Polydamas Swallowtail <i>Battus polydamas</i> | year-round | year-round | pipevines | many butterflies |
| Giant Swallowtail <i>Papilio cresphontes</i> | year-round | year-round | wild lime, citrus | largest Florida butterfly |
| Black Swallowtail <i>Papilio polyxenes</i> | spring-summer | spring-summer | fennel, parsley, dill | overwinters as pupa |
| Cloudless Sulphur <i>Phoebis sennae</i> | year-round | year-round | sennas and cassias | Sulphur caterpillars are green if leaves are eaten and yellow if flowers are eaten |
| Orange-barred Sulphur <i>Phoebis philea</i> | year-round | year-round | sennas and cassias | |
| Great Southern White <i>Ascia monuste</i> | spring-summer | spring-summer | arugula, radish, mustard family/ Jamaica caper | numerous during population bursts |
| Cassius Blue <i>Leptotes cassius</i> | year-round | year-round | plumbago/wild tamarind | small green caterpillars tended by ants |
| Gulf Fritillary <i>Agraulis vanillae</i> | year-round | year-round | passionvines | peaks in spring, one of most common in the garden |
| Zebra Heliconian <i>Heliconius charitonius</i> | year-round | year-round | passionvines | long-lived butterfly, roost communally, Florida's state butterfly |
| Julia Heliconian <i>Dryas iulia</i> | year-round | year-round | passionvines | prefers native passionvine |
| White Peacock <i>Anartia jatrophae</i> | year-round | year-round | water hyssop, wild petunia | common around lakes and ponds |
| Monarch <i>Danaus plexippus</i> | year-round | year-round | milkweeds | resident in S. Florida; peaks in spring, fall |
| Queen <i>Danaus gilippus</i> | year-round | year-round | milkweeds | also uses white twinevine |
| Monk Skipper <i>Asbolis capucinus</i> | year-round | year-round | palms | peaks in spring, summer |

LOCAL & UNUSUAL BUTTERFLIES FOR YOUR GARDEN & YARD

| NAME | CATERPILLAR FOOD PLANTS |
|--|---|
| Zebra Swallowtail <i>Eurytides marcellus</i> | pawpaw |
| Eastern Tiger Swallowtail <i>Papilio glaucus</i> | sweetbay, willow, ash |
| Palamedes Swallowtail <i>Papilio palamedes</i> | red bay |
| Sleepy Orange <i>Eurema nicippe</i> | partridge pea, clover, senna |
| Atala <i>Eumaeus atala</i> | coontie |
| Variiegated Fritillary <i>Euptoieta claudia</i> | passionvines, beggarticks |
| Phaon Crescent <i>Phyciodes phaon</i> | matchweed (creeping Charlie) |
| Pearl Crescent <i>Phyciodes tharos</i> | asters |
| Red Admiral <i>Vanessa atalanta</i> | nettles, false nettles, pellitory, hops |
| Soldier <i>Danaus eresimus</i> | white twinevine (<i>Sarcostema clausum</i>) |
| Common Buckeye <i>Junonia coenia</i> | plantain, snapdragon, matchweed (<i>Phyla nodiflora</i>), wild petunia |
| Malachite <i>Siproeta stelenes</i> | wild petunia (<i>Ruellia</i>) |
| Viceroy <i>Limenitis archippus</i> | willows, plums |
| Duskywings <i>Erynnis</i> | oaks |
| Grass skippers Hesperinae (Fiery, Whirlabout, Eufala etc.) | common, but not always in manicured lawn habitats, unless there's Bermuda and St. Augustine grass with no chemical spraying |

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT GARDENING IN THIS REGION

USDA ZONE: 10

We mainly have sandy soils since most of our house pads are on fill. Some of us may have low spots that are wetter and allow for a wider diversity of plants. Those with sandy soil may want to amend areas of your garden with peat, humus, and cow manure for wetland plants. Although sandy soils can't hold as much moisture as richer soils, many plants need well-drained soil. Most native plants don't need much watering once they're established. Plan to irrigate only during dry periods. We recommend planting native plants whenever possible and avoiding invasive pest plants.

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